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THE

TRUE HUMANITY OF CHRIST.

BY HOWARD CROSBY.

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THE

TRUE HUMANITY OF CHRIST.

BY

HOWARD CROSBY,

PASTOR OF THE FOURTH AVENUE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, NEW YORK, AND CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK.

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PREFACE.

TEN years ago, when I wrote the following essay, I had no knowledge of the history of the doctrine of Christ's humanity, but prepared the paper solely from my own researches in the Word of God.

Since then I have made myself familiar with the early controversies regarding the person of Christ, in which Nestorius and Eutyches represented the two extreme views, and also with the notions of the Churches of the Reformation (Lutheran and Reformed), regarding the two natures of Christ, with the Tübingen-Giessen controversy, and with the Kenosis discussions of the present century.

After this study I am not inclined to change a word of what I wrote ten years ago.

I find, that of all writers on the subject, Gess and Godet most nearly present the view which independently convinced my judgment.

The Word became flesh. The Son of God reduced

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Himself to the dimensions of humanity. As such He was one Ego and not two. Thus much to my mind is clear from the Scriptures. How this could be and the Godhead be maintained in its integrity, or how the Son of God could reduce Himself until the Godhood was inefficient or inactive—these are questions out of human reach. So all questions regarding the present humanity of Christ and its relation to His divinity are beyond revelation.

I cannot but think that the error of writers who have been perfectly correct about the Kenosis has been in attempting to answer all the questions which the doctrine involves. There always must remain much that is mysterious and incomprehensible in the incarnation, whatever theory be advocated.

The view taken in this paper seems to me to be the simple Scriptural view, and is one full of comforting power to the soul that seeks the closest union with Jesus, making clear His temptation and His sufferings.

H. C.

NEW YORK, 1880.

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HISTORICAL SKETCH OF OPINIONS.

APOLLINARIS (A.D.) 370)—Christ's mind was the Logos (as against Arian doctrine of Christ's fallibility.)

NESTORIUS (400)—Inhabitation of man Jesus by Logos, hence duality of persons.

CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA (430)—Christ a man physically, but intellectually and morally not. His growth in mind was an *appearance.*

EUTYCHES (440)—Christ's divinity everything—the extreme of Cyril's view.

JOHN OF DAMASCUS (760)—Held Cyril's views.

THOMAS AQUINAS (1250)—Confuses the matter, making Christ like us; and yet again making him both in body and soul different from us.

REFORMED VIEW (1550)—Sustentation of the humanity by the Logos. Double consciousness.

LUTHERAN VIEW (1550)—Communication to the humanity of divine properties.

ZINZENDORF (1730)—The Logos reduced himself to the rank and measure of humanity.

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THOMASIUS (1845)—One Ego. The Logos limits himself. He empties himself, not of essential deity, but of the divine manner of existence.

GESS (1856)—The Logos so reduced himself as to have a truly human development. He became a human soul, with the *posse peccare.*

EBRARD (1845)—Logos became a human soul, giving up the form of eternity, but possessed divine properties in temiform.

MARTENSEN (1856)—Logos possesses his Godhead in limited forms of human consciousness. Christ is the fullness of Godhead within the compass of humanity. But at the same time the Logos leads another full divine life.

THE TÜBINGEN-GIESSEN controversy. 1600.

GIESSEN—Abdicated use of his divine powers at times. He could will them away.

TÜBINGEN—Never abdicated their use, but used them secretly. Personally united to him, he could not will them away.

This sketch is taken from Prof. Bruce's admirable work, "The "Humiliation of Christ." (Edin. 1876.)

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THE TRUE HUMANITY OF CHRIST.

THE writers who have attempted to overthrow "the truth as it is in Jesus,"[1] by destroying confidence in Jesus himself, have aimed their blows at a Jesus of their imagination, and not the Jesus of the gospels. They have described either an enthusiast or an impostor. He has been a self-deceiver or a deceiver of others. But the enthusiast or self-deceiver is rash and impetuous. In his ardor for one thing, he tramples on many. Moreover, he is a dreamy man, much abstracted from the ordinary life of men. It needs no elaborate argument to show how

[1] Eph. iv. 21.

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completely antipodal to such a character was the character of Christ. He was a man, it is true, not without emotion. He wept, He groaned, He sighed, He was indignant, He expostulated, He entreated. But, with all this, He held His emotional nature in reasonable check. While shedding tears at the grave of Lazarus, He could show His sympathy and furnish comfort for others; while denouncing the treacherous Pharisees, He could speak tenderly of murderous Jerusalem; and while in the agonies of death upon the cross, He could gently say to Mary and to John, "Behold thy son,—behold thy mother." The whole history of His life is marked by a calm self-restraint. In the only instance that is an apparent exception,—the expulsion of the traders and money-changers from the temple, (an action twice occurring, John ii. 15, and Matt. xxi. 12,)—we may note that while there are decision and energy

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and even violence expressed in this scene, there is with it, in the one case, the gathering of the blind and lame about Jesus, and the outpouring of His healing love, and in both cases an evident authority in the action which robbed it of all look of enthusiasm in the obnoxious sense, so that the powers of the temple, with all their enmity, dared not interfere. He was careful to avoid exciting the political forces of Galilee or Judea. Though never compromising or concealing the truth for this reason, yet He used a wholesome prudence in dispersing, or escaping from, the crowds which followed Him, in quitting Herod's dominion, and taking temporary refuge in Philip's territory, east of the lake of Gennesaret, or in the region of Tyre, in forbidding those that were healed from an injudicious proclamation of His work, in conforming to customs that were national, though they might have been justly resisted,

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and in the avoidance of all animadversion upon the authorities of government. With this equanimity and prudence, He mingled freely and fully in the daily affairs of men. He was in the market or place of public exchange, in the synagogues, at feasts and weddings, in the houses of the poor and the rich, among the fishermen, with the crowds in the temple court, and amid the thronging thousands at the annual festivals. He would retire alone to deserted districts and mountain heights for prayer, but only for short seasons. He was eminently a man of the people, a man of society. The phrase of Terence might appropriately be used by Him: "Homo sum et nîl humani a me alienum puto." His conversation was eminently practical, having cognizance of, and relation to, the many-sided duties and incidents of daily life. There were no assumptions of higher knowledge or higher rank;

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there was nothing haughty or supercilious in His demeanor, no affected distance in manner and habits, no enshrouding of His person in mystery. When Pharisees turned upon Him, it was not because He was an enthusiast, but because there was such a power of truth in His calmness as He reviewed their hypocritical lives, and when His own family and townspeople looked askance at Him, it was, again, because of no wild enthusiasm which they beheld in Him, but because they could not reconcile His wonderful words and acts with the condition of a Nazareth carpenter. There never was a public character so devoid of the characteristics of enthusiasm, if we use the word in the sense of a self-deceiving and unbalanced zeal. Much more is it impossible to find in His life the first trace of imposture. A life of poverty and self-denial, carefully repelling any efforts made by others for His aggran-

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dizement, refusing to take advantage of the full tide of public sentiment running in His favor, promising no earthly portion but persecution to His followers, seeking neither adulation nor support, and looking forward to a painful death,—such a life has not a feature that does not prove the charge of imposture an absurdity. An impostor is self-seeking, rules his victims, assumes a Delphic air, and is afraid to expose himself to public scrutiny. Compare Mohammed with Jesus, and see how different they appear. The contrast brings out the truthfulness of our Saviour's life. But, beside these general features of truthfulness, we find three years of miracles testifying to the whole life of our Lord. There was not here a miracle done in a corner, and there another seen by but one or two, but daily, in village, town, or city, among myriads of spectators, the lame walked, the blind saw, the deaf heard, the dumb

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spake, the sick were made well, and the dead were raised to life. These evidences of the truth of Jesus were poured out freely upon the whole land, so that no one thought of disputing the fact of miracles; but in their hostility to Christ, the Pharisees raised the weak and senseless theory that He was inspired and empowered by Satan! It was left to the wiseacres of later centuries to give the lie to all Palestine, and deny the fact of miracles.

Internal and external evidence thus conspire to give every thoughtful and reasonable man implicit confidence in the words of Jesus. Whatever the Jesus of Strauss, or the Jesus of Renan may be, the Jesus of the gospels is the embodiment of truth. To refuse allegiance to Him and His words is to stultify one's reason, and to dishonor one's manhood. It is to deny the sun in the heavens, and swear that white is black. A man who re-

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jects the truth as it is in Jesus has no right to believe anything. He is an outcast from order, an eternal denizen of chaos.

In order that we may rightly understand the person of Jesus, let us, then, first inquire of the Master himself, and hear His own perfect testimony.

In the sermon on the mount, delivered early in His three years' ministry, He represents Himself as the principal personage at the day of judgment: "Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? . . . . and then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity."[1] When the Pharisees rebuked Him for allowing His disciples to pluck and eat the ears of wheat in a Galilean grain-field, He told them that He was the Lord of the Sabbath,[2] a phrase which pointed directly to the words of the

[1] Matt. vii. 22, 23.

[2] Matt. xii. 8.

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fourth commandment, "for the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God." In encouraging Peter, He calls the Church "My Church,"[1] utterly ignoring any other headship than His own. At a subsequent occasion, He declares that He shall come in the glory of the Father, with His angels, and then shall reward every man according to his works.[2] Here the judgment is His and the angels are His, and in the same connection He asserts that the kingdom is His.[3] He is the supreme King. So He assures them that in the regeneration He shall sit in the throne of His glory,[4] and adds, at another time, that when He comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, He shall sit on the throne of His glory, as the judge of all nations, and their final arbiter.[5] In like manner, before the high priest, where it was necessary to

[1] Matt. xvi. 18. [2] Matt. xvi. 27. [3] Matt. xvi. 28.
[4] Matt. xix. 28. [5] Matt. xxv. 31–46.

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diminish naught of His prerogatives, He utters what from the lips of a mere man, or even the highest angel, would have been clear blasphemy, as Caiaphas testified: "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."[1]

When Jesus at Jerusalem said to the multitude, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," the Jews considered this as an assumption of equality with God. Does Jesus start back from this as a false interpretation of His meaning? On the contrary, He goes on to confirm their view of His meaning, and assures them that all should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father.[2] His declaration, "Come unto *me*, and I will give you rest,"[3] as well as His repeated announcement that He was the Bread of Life,[4] are alike

[1] Matt. xxvi. 64. [2] John v. 17, 18, 23. [3] Matt. xi. 28.
[4] John vi. 33, 35, 48, 51.

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gross and blasphemous assumptions, except from the supreme source of life and peace. In the temple-court, amid the crowds of worshippers, this same Jesus exclaimed, "Before Abraham was, I am,"[1] a phrase which could only mean eternal Deity, and hence the immediate rush of the throng to slay the Galilean on the spot. A like movement followed a later declaration in the same place, "I and my Father are one,"[2] where the *argumentum ad hominem* which follows in no way detracts from the original significance of the Saviour's assertion, any more than His words, "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but God," addressed to the young ruler,[3] denied His own goodness. In each case there is an appeal to the view from their own standpoint. When Jesus entered Jerusalem on the ass's colt, He received the salutations of a vast multitude, addressing Him as the King

[1] John viii. 58. [2] John x. 30. [3] Matt. xix. 17.

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of Israel,[1] a title which prophecy had applied to Jehovah, the Creator.[2] It is not probable that the multitude understood the full significance of the epithet, as they had misconstrued the prophecies, and reduced the notion of the coming David; but of Jesus this ignorance cannot be predicated, and His tacit reception of the title "King of Israel" from the mass of Israelites, was the assumption of divine honors. In the intercessory prayer, just before the betrayal, Jesus uses this language, "Glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."[3] Here is not only pre-existent glory, but partnership in glory with the Supreme. He had already said to Philip and the other disciples, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."[4] Leaving this direct testimony of Jesus to Himself, let

[1] John xii. 13. [2] Isa. xli. 21; xliii. 15; Jer. viii. 19; xlvi. 18; Hosea xiii. 10. [3] John xvii. 5. [4] John xiv. 9.

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us add the testimony of those who witnessed His life and received His enlightening Spirit. The apostle John declares that the Word that was made flesh was God.[1] The same witness explains this fact of God becoming flesh by saying, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him."[2] The same eminent apostle, in his first epistle, so associates the names of the Father and the Son, as to forbid a distinction in rank and glory. He calls Jesus "that Eternal Life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." He says, "Our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." Again, "He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son." "Ye shall continue in the Son and in the Father." And at the close of his epistle he declares that the Son Jesus Christ "is the true God and the

[1] John i. 1, 14. [2] John i. 18.

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Eternal Life."[1] The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews asserts that this Son of God is the brightness of His glory, and the impress of His substance, and upholds all things by the word of His power.[2] He represents the Father as addressing Him, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever."[3] The angels bow before Him, and He is declared, in unmistakable language, "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever."[4] In the Patmos vision, the revelator hears Jesus exclaim, "I am Alpha and Omega," the very phrase which is given as the Supreme's distinct claim,—"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."[5] Every one recognizes at once the language of Jehovah as repeatedly exhibited by the evangelic prophet. In the same book of the

[1] John i. 2, 3; ii. 22, 24; v. 20.
[2] Heb. i. 3.
[3] Heb. i. 8.
[4] Heb. i. 6; xiii. 8.
[5] Rev. i. 8, 11.

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Revelation we find such conjunctions as these, "the throne of God and the Lamb," "the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it;" "the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."[1] Then we find that the Lamb is styled "Lord of lords and King of kings," and is the same as "the Word."[2] This mightiest of all is the Lamb that had been slain, the Lamb of God to whom the Baptist pointed by the side of Jordan.[3] The apostle Peter begins his second epistle by addressing it "to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ,"[4] and then speaks of Him as the monarch of the everlasting kingdom. Paul calls Jesus the Lord of the dead and the living, and declares that we must all appear before His judgment

[1] Rev. xxii. 1, 3; xxi. 22, 23.
[2] Rev. xvii. 14; xix. 16, 13.
[3] Rev. v. 6, and John 1. 29.
[4] 2 Pet. i. 1, margin, and v. 11.

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seat.[1] In the same breath he speaks of the Spirit of Christ and the Spirit of God as synonymous,[2] and in all his epistles he makes Christ everything for the soul, which, if Christ were not God, would be most derogatory to the Deity, and unsatisfactory to the heart that hungers after God himself. But why multiply these testimonies? They lie all along the history and doctrine of the New Testament, so that no consistent mind can hesitate to adore, with Thomas, before the risen Jesus, and say, in faith and gratitude, "My Lord and my God."

The supreme Godhood of Jesus Christ is thus a truth as clear as the light of day. Every page of the New Testament receives its peculiar force from this fundamental fact, and there is no avoidance of its power but in the rejection of the Scripture itself. The Christ of the Bible is God over all.

[1] Rom. xiv. 9, 10.

[2] Rom. viii. 9.

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But a remarkable fact that lies alongside of this is, that no *action* of our Saviour's earthly life, from Bethlehem to Calvary, exhibits divinity. He first appears a helpless babe in the manger. He is subject to His parents. As the child grows, He waxes strong in spirit and increases in wisdom. Such an increase in wisdom implies increase in knowledge, and less knowledge or greater ignorance to-day than to-morrow. Omniscience could not have been exercised by the Jesus who was growing in wisdom. If any say here, as we usually do, that the humanity grew, but the divinity was omniscient, let us ask if there were two persons in Jesus. This Nestorianism is practically the creed of the present day with the Reformed Churches. In denying the practical Eutychianism and Sabellianism of the Roman and Lutheran Churches, which lose the humanity of Christ in His divinity, the Reformed Churches have

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gone over to a virtual duplication of the person of Christ."[1] By this error they as completely destroy the true humanity of Christ as do the Docetae. For what sort of humanity is that which has a Divine activity inseparably attached to it? Where can there be room for temptation or suffering in such a man? How is Christ made like unto His brethren, if He is a duality of consciousness, while they have but a single consciousness to fall back upon? The Scriptures assure us that the Logos *became* flesh (not *assumed* flesh),—ἐγένετο σάρξ,[2]—that He was truly man in all the essentials of manhood. Sin is *not*

[1] I use "person" in the ordinary sense of individuality or oneness of efficient being, and not in the technical and extraordinary sense in which we apply it to the persons of the Trinity. No orthodox believer denies that Christ was a separate and single person (or hypostasis) in the Trinity, but the vast mass of orthodox believers makes Christ, as God-man, a double person in the ordinary meaning of that word, as applied to all beyond His mere corporeal frame. He is thus made not the "God-man," but the "God and man."

[2] John i. 14.

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an essential of manhood, and sin could never be predicated of Him. But every other human experience was His. In this fact consisted His power of perfect sympathy with us in our trials and temptations, a power so often asserted of Him by the sacred writers,[1] and which forms so precious a possession for the faith of His Church. Now, if an active deity was present in Christ, above and beyond His manhood, as He suffered and was tempted, such a duality, which amounts to a bi-personality, utterly destroys His likeness to us in our suffering and temptation. The souls sent to such a Christ may find compassion and help, but not a sympathy that grows out of "being tempted in all points like as we are, saving sin," and being "compassed with a like infirmity." What sympathy can the winged bird have with the crawling worm? But, says the objector, do

[1] Heb. iv. 15, and v. 2.

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you then deny the deity of Christ? Nay, have we not seen and shown that Christ's deity is a rock that cannot be shaken? We simply assert that in order to a veritable mono-personality necessary to a true manhood, the Divine nature, as regards its efficiency, was dormant in Christ during His humiliation. Its essence was there, for it is impossible for Deity to become extinct, but its efficiency was in some mysterious way paralyzed in the person of Jesus. Christ was always God, but He was not always directly conscious of His Godhood, even when assured of His Godhood, nor could He exercise its powers. Herein was His great humiliation. *Ἐγένετο σάρξ.* He emptied Himself,—*ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσε.*

In accordance with this view, as I asserted before, no *action* of our Saviour's life exhibits divinity. His *words* declare, but His actions do not exhibit His Godhood by the exercise

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of Divine attributes.[1] At once we are met by the miracles, and asked if they were not the actions of omnipotence. We reply, No; no more than the miracles of Moses, Elijah, and Paul. There is a popular fallacy that our Saviour spake in working miracles with an authority peculiar to Himself, while others who wrought miracles modestly spake in the name of God. The sacred record will not bear out this theory, except for burial. Paul's words to the Lystra cripple were simply "Stand upright on thy feet." Compare that with Christ's words to Jairus's daughter, "Maid, arise." Is there any difference of tone? What could be more divine in its style than Joshua's command to the sun and moon? I would commend it to those who

[1] We do not say His words are rays of divinity, but they assert divinity. Christ's knowledge of His divinity (during His humiliation) was not through consciousness, but through faith in God's Word and Spirit. He was "led by the Spirit." "God gave not the Spirit by measure to Him."

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say that Christ's divinity was seen in His saying, "Peace, be still," to the stormy waves of Galilee. If those words and that miracle were the exhibitions of divinity, then surely Joshua was divine, when he said, "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou, moon, in the valley of Ajalon." So far from working miracles by His own power, our Saviour expressly disclaims such original power, and asserts over and over that He acted by a delegated authority. "The works," He says, "which the Father hath given me to perform, the same works which I do bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me."[1] The miracles were wrought to prove that He was *sent of God*, not to prove that He *was* God. That great fact His words and teachings would establish, after they had received Him as sent of God. Miracles have been vouchsafed to our earth at three periods only of

[1] John v. 36.

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our race's history: for seventy years, or thereabouts, in the days of Moses and Joshua; for seventy years, or thereabouts, in the days of Elijah and Elisha; and for seventy years, or thereabouts, in the days of Christ and His apostles;[1] and in all these cases they have had but one and the same object, to prove that the worker had God's endorsement, or was "sent of God." Moses, Elijah, and Christ, the three who together conversed on the transfiguration mount, who each fasted forty days in the wilderness, were the three exponents of the three miracle-periods, and each received the power to work miracles for the same purpose, to show the Divine origin of a mission which shook the foundations of things then existing. Christ wrought His

[1] The only exceptional cases are two: the prophet's miracle at the Bethel altar (1 Kings xiii. 3–5); and the return of the shadow on the dial of Ahaz (2 Kings xx. 11). These two can well be considered as belonging, before and after, to the Elijah period, for the recovery of Israel to the truth.

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miracles by faith and prayer. Hear His own words at the grave of Lazarus, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me."[1] Again, He says to the Jews, "The works that I do *in my Father's name*, they bear witness of me."[2] So the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews says, "Who, in the body of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto to him that was able to save him from death, and was heard *in that he feared* (*ἀπὸ τῆς εὐλαβείας*, —*because of his piety*)."[3] If the miracles of Jesus had been the direct acts of His own omnipotence, He could never have said, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and *greater* works than these shall he do."[4] It is worthy of note, in this connection, that Jesus does not upbraid the Jews for ignoring His divinity, but for ignor-

[1] John xi. 41.
[2] John x. 25.
[3] Heb. v. 7.
[4] John xiv. 12.

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ing His divine mission. When He declared that He and the Father were one, and the Jews took up stones to stone Him, He did not reproach them for denying His divinity (although He asserted it), but because while they allowed inspired men of old to be called "Elohim," they would not allow Him, so clearly proved to be an inspired man, to be called the Son of God.[1] "Say ye of Him, whom the Father *hath sanctified and sent into the world*, thou blasphemeth, because I said I am Son of God?"

But we are told that Jesus had power to lay down His life and power to take it up again,[2] and this is proof of His active omnipotence. But what says He of this? I have authority (ἐξουσίαν) to lay it down, and I have authority (ἐξουσίαν) to take it again. "*This commandment have I received of my Father.*" It is a delegated authority of which

[1] See John x. 30–36. [2] John x. 18.

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He speaks, and surely, therefore, there is no omnipotence here. Precisely so when He asserts His power to forgive sins, His words are, "But that ye may know that the Son of man hath authority (ἐξουσίαν) on earth to forgive sins, (then saith He to the sick of the palsy), Arise, take up thy bed and go unto thine house;" and then we are told that the people glorified God, who *had given such authority* (ἐξουσίαν) *unto men.*[1] It is true that we need not press this matter of the forgiveness of sins by Christ in His humiliation, because such forgiveness is not properly classed under acts of omnipotence, but may have been the assertion of the man Christ Jesus in behalf of His dormant Godhood.[2]

Passing from omnipotence to omniscience,

[1] Matt. ix. 6, 8.

[2] That the healing touch of Christ's body was proof of His omnipotence is at once disposed of by the fact that from Paul's body handkerchiefs and aprons were taken which healed diseases and cast out demons. (Acts ix. 12.)

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we are asked, Did not Jesus know the hearts of men? Now let us put together all the instances in which such knowledge is affirmed. First, in the case just cited, "Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said." Then, after healing the dumb, blind man, "Jesus knew their thoughts and said."[1] Then, in the scene of the tribute-money, "He, knowing their hypocrisy, said." Again, when the withered hand was healed, "He knew their thoughts and said." Again, when His disciples were disputing for precedence, "Jesus, perceiving the thoughts of their heart, took a child, etc."[2] Then, last of all, the declaration in John that "Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man."[3] Now there is

[1] Matt. ix. 4; xii. 25. [2] Mark xii. 15; Luke vi. 8, and xi. 47.

[3] John ii. 24, 25. We may also add the passages (John vi. 64, and xiii. 11) in which Jesus is said to have known from the beginning who should betray Him. A special revelation is the

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nothing in these passages which could not apply to a man of acute observation, especially if inspired of God as Jesus was without measure (John iii. 34). Equally strong phraseology is used of prophets and apostles. Paul at Lystra "perceived that the cripple had faith to be healed."[1] Peter knew the thoughts of Ananias. So Peter read the soul of Simon Magus, when he said, "I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." Elisha knew the heart of Gehazi when he said unto him, "Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee?"[2] There is nothing in our Lord's seeing Nathanael under the fig-tree more wonderful than these instances of the prophets and apostles. Nathanael did not consider that miraculous knowledge a proof of deity, but

most ready solution of this. Otherwise, why is it mentioned at all, and not taken for granted?

[1] Acts xiv. 9. [2] Acts v. 3, and 2 Kings v. 26.

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a proof of Messiahship. Just so the Samaritan woman, when Jesus showed her that He knew her history, exclaimed, "I perceive thou art a prophet," and to her people she suggested not that He was God, but that He was the Messiah.[1] Now when we add to these negative testimonies the positive declarations of Christ's lack of knowledge while in His humiliation, we are completely debarred from ascribing to Him a present efficient omniscience. In speaking to His four disciples, Peter, James, John, and Andrew (while sitting on the slope of the Mount of Olives over against the temple) with regard to the Son of man's coming in the clouds with great power and glory, He says, "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." Here He expressly declares His ignorance of the time. Is it

[1] John i. 48, and iv. 19, 29.

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anything but trifling to say that the *man* Jesus did not know, but the *God* Jesus did? Was not He who spake to the four disciples *one* person? Was He a double who could deceive His disciples by equally affirming or denying personal action of Himself as one thing or the other? When He said He did *not* know, did He all the while know perfectly well? It is a strange theology that teaches this of Him who was the Truth. When Jesus was asleep, was He all the time awake? Did He have only the semblance of sleep? Was He acting a part? Away with such a staining of the simplicity and beauty of Christ's life by a theological subtlety wholly uncalled for! When Jesus was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow, that person, whom the disciples knew, that particular individuality, whom they loved and followed, was asleep, unobserving, unknowing, unconscious. And so when He was a babe, He

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was a very babe. A present active Godhood would have destroyed the babe and made a monstrosity. We need not refer again to the declaration that Jesus grew in wisdom, but add only one other instance of His positive lack of knowledge in His conduct when touched by the woman who had an issue of blood. Can any candid man read that narrative and suppose Jesus knew who touched Him? If it were written of any one else but Jesus, such a notion never would have been broached. Jesus, knowing by some sign, which only a miracle worker could understand, that a healing virtue had gone from Him, turns to find out the subject of the healing, and, after some delay, discovers her by her own fears and confession. This is the story. Make Jesus to have pretended this ignorance and the grace of the scene is sadly marred, while the language is rudely wrested. The sacred writer, if Jesus had known who

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had touched Him, would have written, "Jesus immediately knowing in himself who it was who touched him;" but instead of that he says, "Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that healing virtue had gone out of him." We have time to say but a few words regarding the absence of any conscious omnipresence in Jesus, while in His state of humiliation. Here we can educe no positive proof, because in the nature of the case, no act of His life would suggest His omnipresence; His body being only in one place at one time. We confine ourselves to answering the only Scripture passage which appears to claim a conscious omnipresence for Christ while on earth as man. It is the passage in John iii. 13: "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man *which is in heaven.*" Here the Son of man is said to be in heaven, while on earth. Of course His *body* could not have

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been in both places; therefore He must have been there as out of the body; and as the passage implies a conscious existence, the Son of man must have had two distinct conscious existences, one on earth, and one in heaven, one in the body, and the other not confined to the body. From all we have seen already, we could surmise that in this sole passage, which seems to look the other way, there must be some error of translation, and I think no Greek scholar will fail to detect the flaw. The phrase ὁ ὢν ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ is translated "which is in heaven," and doubtless it can be so rightly rendered. But it is equally correct to render it "which *was* in heaven." The participle ὤν is aoristic, although called present. There is no past participle to the substantive verb. Hence in 2 Cor. viii. 9, we find "though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor," where "though he was rich" is πλούσιος ὤν. He was rich before

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He became poor, so here He was in heaven before He came down from heaven. And that the presence of the article ὁ ὢν here, while in the passage in Corinthians the article is wanting, makes no difference with our reasoning, is evident from the fact that the Greeks, even where verbs *had* past participles, used the present participle with the article to designate past events. For example, in Matt. ii. 20, "They are dead which sought the young child's life." (*τεθνήκασι γαρ οἱ ζητοῦντες τὴν ψυχὴν τὸν παιδίον.*) Here if we translate *οἱ ζητοῦντες*, the present participle with the article, as our version translates ὁ ὢν in the passage we are considering, we shall have nonsense, "for they that *are* seeking the young child's life are dead." The whole participial phrase might be rendered by a compound noun in English, "the child's life-seekers."[1] So our phrase ὁ ὢν ἐν τῷ

[1] So Matt. xi. 14, *αὐτός ἐστιν Ἠλίας ὁ μέλλων ἐρχεσθαι.* "This is Elias who *was* for to come."

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οὐρανῷ, may be rendered "the heaven-dweller," where it is an epithet of Jesus, but by no means denying His absence from heaven for a time. All that our Saviour says in this passage is that He, the individual then present and talking to Nicodemus, was an inhabitant of heaven from all eternity; but no assertion of a present conscious habitancy of heaven can be insisted on from the language. Such a statement would have been made sure by ὃς ἔστι and not by ὁ ὤν.[1] In accordance with this our interpretation is the question of our Saviour to His disciples, "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up *where he was before?*"[2] With this view of the κένωσις of Christ, we can understand why our Saviour cried out to the Father, in Geth-

[1] Even the ordinary rendering of this passage does not touch our argument. For Christ's *essential* deity (we hold) existed necessarily at all times and in all places. We only speak of His *conscious* and *efficien* deity. We assert that His deity (*i.e.*, His divine attributes) was (for lack of a better word) dormant.

[2] John vi. 62.

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semane, and not to His divine nature, and why He could feel forsaken of God upon the cross. A consciously-acting deity in Christ at this time is not simply a mystery, but a contradiction. We can also go with our Lord to the wilderness, and feel the full force of His example in resisting temptation, which it is utterly impossible to do if a Deity, active and efficient in Christ, is imagined. It was faith that sustained our Lord in that trial, and hence He is our beautiful and perfect pattern. As soon as He knew it was Satan, and not a friend seeking His good with mistaken judgment, who was His companion, He indignantly orders Him away. Would He have allowed Him to stay and tempt Him further, had He known before that it was Satan? Would not such tampering with Satan have been sin?[1]

[1] We can also understand why it was necessary for Jesus to go to the Father, before He could confer the gift of the Holy Ghost upon His Church. He must regain the use of His Godhood before this Divine action could be performed.

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The whole life of Jesus becomes luminous with a new glory when we behold Him, while Deity, yet a very man by the dormancy or quiescence of His divine nature during His humiliation.[1] He is brought very near to us in His sympathy and love. While mystery remains connected with His person (as mystery must be always connected with the incarnate God), yet that mystery is not now where mystery repels comfort and faith. The mystery is now in the dormancy or quiescence of the Godhead, and not in the confusing presence of Godhood and manhood together in their conscious acting.[2]

[1] The *dormancy* of His Godhood is no more inconceivable than the *limitation* of His Godhood. The former, however, makes Him very man; the latter does not.

[2] It was at the resurrection that Christ reassumed the full powers of His Godhood. He was declared (says the apostle) to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection of the dead (Rom. i. 4). After the resurrection, He moved no more as man among His disciples. He only appeared to them a few times and for a few moments,—He came and vanished. His simple human equality with them was at an end. The divine over-

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In thus regarding our Saviour's humiliation there is nothing derogatory to His sacred character, any more than there is in His sighing, weeping, groaning, bleeding, and dying. Nor is there anything which supports Socinianism. On the contrary, this view presents the only solid arguments against the errors of Arius and Socinus, by acknowledging the true and unmysterious manhood of Jesus Christ as the temporary humiliation of the God from eternity and to eternity, showing that there is not and ought not to be a vestige of Deity in His conscious life till after the resurrection, and that therefore the passages of Scripture so constantly quoted by the Unitarians are nothing to the point. By our false method of defending ourselves against their attacks, we only confirm them in error,

shadowed the human, and henceforth intimate personal intercourse with Jesus must be deferred till the disciples enter the heavenly home.

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and shake the weak souls who are on the truth's side.[1]

"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest

[1] I cannot forbear transcribing the following from De Pressensé, which, with slight modifications, forcibly expresses the truth I have endeavored to exhibit:

"Jesus Christ is not the Son of God hidden in the Son of man, retaining all the attributes of Divinity in a latent state. This would be to admit an irreducible duality, which would do away with the unity of His person, and would withdraw Him from the normal conditions of human life. His obedience would become illusory, and His example would be without application to our race. No! when the Word became flesh, He humbled Himself, He put off His glory, being rich He became poor, and was made in all points like as we are, only without sin, that He might pass through the moral conflict with all the perils of freedom. He is the Son of God, who has voluntarily abased Himself, and this 'humiliation' is the beginning, as it is the condition, of His sacrifice. Of His divinity, He retained that which constitutes in a manner its moral essence; and He is not the less man on that account, because man is only complete in God. Unless we would fall into a doctrine which would make a phantom of Christ, and an illusion of the Gospel, we must needs admit in all its import and with all its mystery, this humiliation of the Word,—a truth far too much lost sight of by the theological school of the fourth century. In the preceding age, in the midst of hesitations and

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which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. iv. 14–16).

uncertainties of formula, there never ceased to be faith in the truly Man Christ; there was no recourse to the dogma of two natures, but a faithful adherence to the beliefs of apostolic times, too living and too profound to be lost in such metaphysical distinctions. *Homo factus est*, said Irenæus, *ut nos assuefacerct fieri dei.* . . . . Christ is not that strange Messiah, who possesses, as God, omniscience and omnipotence, while as man His power and knowledge are limited. We believe in a Christ who has become truly like unto us, who was subject to the conditions of progress and gradual development of human life; and who was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. From such a point of view the Gospel is living and human; it ceases to resemble a Byzantine painting, stiff and motionless in its frame of gold, with all individual expression merged in conventional coloring."—*De Pressensé's Life of Christ*, book i., chapter 5.

I add from Alford: "What vast and glorious realms of the Gospel history are almost meaningless to the common orthodox mind of England, because it has been the fashion to invest the *self-emptied and humiliated* Saviour on every occasion in His earthly course with the present and consciously-exercised attributes of His divinity!"

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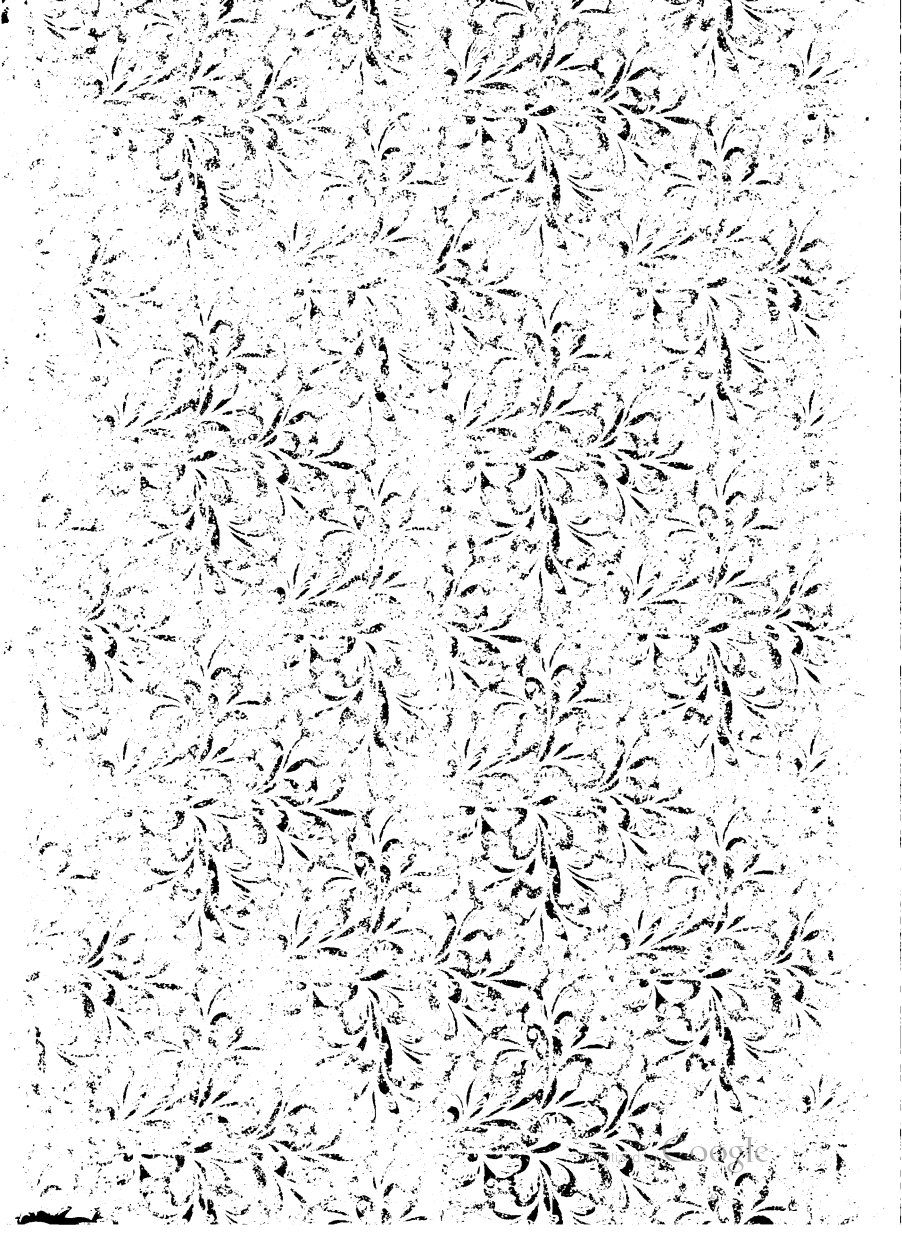

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